

Social Work Professional Advisory Group
Meeting Minutes
3 December 2014

Leadership Present: CDR Buckingham, Chair
CDR Scottie Epler, Chair Elect and Policy Chair
LCDR Christine Nemeti, Secretary
CDR Todd Cesar, Readiness/Deployment Chair
CDR Malaysia Gresham, Mentoring Chair
CDR Kathleen Watkins, Career Development Chair
LCDR Tricia Booker, Communications Chair
LCDR Sonjia Howard, Recruitment & Retention Chair
LCDR Lamar Henderson, Membership Chair

Membership Present:
CDR Carlos Castillo
CDR Marivic Fields
CDR Robert Garcia
CDR Elizabeth Hastings
CDR Todd Lennon
CDR Jerald Mahlau-Heinert
CDR Julie Niven

LCDR Holly Berilla
LCDR Marion Collins
LCDR Andrea Cunningham
LCDR Kimberly Jones
LCDR Gina Ligonde
LCDR Joel Nelson
LCDR Renee Pleasanton
LCDR Dexter Pritchett
LCDR Kymberly Spady-Grove

LT Tyson Baize
LT Nicole Pascua
LT Tigisty Zerislassie

I. Chair Report, CDR Buckingham

- A. Thank you to everyone for your hard work and accomplishments this year.
- B. Pleased to serve as Senior Advisor for the next 2-years.
- C. Handed the meeting over to the new Chair, CDR Scottie Epler

II. Chair Report, CDR Eppler

- A. Thank you to CDR Buckingham for his leadership and for initiating the No Social Worker Left Behind Initiative.
- B. Congratulations to the newly elected chair elect and secretary. The chair elect for 2015 will be CDR Malaysia Gresham and the secretary will be LCDR Alexia Blyther.

III. Subcommittee Reports: 2014 accomplishments

- A. Career Development (CDR Watkins)
 - i. Facilitated an upgrade for all USPHS officers with the Army in an O-3 or O-4 billet to an O-5 billet. This should be effective by the end of the year.
 - ii. Facilitated the canceling of all downgrades in billets for social workers detailed with the Army.
- B. Mentorship (CDR Gresham)
 - i. Launched the Guidance and Mentoring Tool and information is located on the website.
 - ii. Facilitated the DOD/VA/USPHS monthly trainings which offered free CEUs. 2,666 individuals participated in these trainings.
- C. Communications (LCDR Booker)
 - i. The SWPAG facebook page was created and is now operational and listed as USPHS SWPAG or at this link:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/292892854222444/>
 - ii. Continues to update the website.
 - iii. Continues to compile and distribute the SWPAG newsletter.
- D. Policy (CDR Eppler)
 - i. Approval by the HSPAC of the SWPAG bylaws changes regarding voting membership has occurred and will be effective in 2016.
 - ii. Presentations on various USPHS policies have been offered at each SWPAG meeting.
- E. Awards
 - i. Letters of Appreciation will be forwarded to subcommittee chairs and participants this week.
- F. Readiness (CDR Todd Cesar)
 - i. Reached out to officers who are not basic ready. SWPAG readiness increased from 91% to 95% and HSO went from 4th ranking to 2nd ranking.
 - ii. Developed a Readiness Deployment tool that is available on the website.
 - iii. Worked with senior leadership to develop a USPHS physical training uniform. This should be effective this month.
- G. Membership (LCDR Lamar Henderson)
 - i. The No Social Worker Left Behind initiative is being elevated to the HSPAC
 - ii. Have contacted all social work officers who have been called to active duty this year and have forwarded welcome packets.

H. Recruitment & Retention (LCDR Howard)

- i. Created a welcome letter for new officers.
- ii. Created and disseminated a Right Sizing survey and forwarded results and recommendations to senior leadership.
- iii. Articles were submitted to all the SWPAG newsletters this year.
- iv. Increased subcommittee membership to 10 members.

IV. Close out, CDR Buckingham

- A. A review of SWPAG yearly highlights
- B. Thank you for allowing him to serve as chair. He will continue as a senior advisor.

V. SWPAG meetings for 2015

- A. 11 March 1430-1530 EST
- B. 10 June 1430-1530 EST
- C. 9 Sept 1430-1530 EST
- D. 9 Dec 1430-1530 EST